

Joint Meeting:
YADKIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
YADKIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
January 28, 2008

The Yadkin County Board of Commissioners met in Joint Session with the Yadkin County Board of Education on Monday, January 21, 2008 at 6:30 p.m., in the Conference Room of the County Planning and Permits Building, 213 E. Elm Street, Yadkinville, NC. The Yadkin County Board of Commissioners was the host for today's meeting. A meal was provided.

Present for the meeting:

Representing the Board of Commissioners

Chair Kim Clark Phillips
Vice Chairman Joel Cornelius
Commissioner Brady Wooten
Commissioner Tommy Garner
Commissioner Chad Wagoner

Representing the Board of Education

Chair, Karin Mendenhall
Brock Matthews
Frank Brown
Diane Hampton
Howard McKnight
Dr. Hazel Brown
Rex Baity (absent from tonight's meeting)

Yadkin County Personnel

Eric Williams, County Manager
Gina Brown, Clerk to the Board

Yadkin County School Personnel

Dr. Jim Benfield, Superintendent
Gary McDonald, Assistant Superintendent
Donald Hawks, Director of Maintenance
Kim Rose, Secretary to Superintendent
Ricky McCollum, Athletic Director
Kelly Mabe, Courtney Elementary Principal
Gale Hill, Yadkin County Schools Finance Officer
Sara McCall, Yadkin County School Curriculum

CALL TO ORDER by Chair Phillips for Board of Commissioners and Chair Mendenhall for Board of Education at 6:30pm

INVOCATION by Diane Hampton of the Board of Education

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE There was no American Flag present in the room. No pledge was recited.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice Chair Cornelius made a motion to approve the presented agenda. Commissioner Wooten second.

Vote: 5/0

WELCOME comments by Chair Phillips with additional remarks from Chair Mendenhall.

AGENDA ITEMS

■ **GROUNDBREAKING AT NEW MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

Chair Phillips addressed the groundbreaking ceremonies scheduled for Monday, February 4, 2008. The Forbush Middle School ceremony will take place at 4:00 with the Starmount Middle School ceremony to follow at 5:00. Directions to the actual site were offered. Mr. McDonald also announced that interested parties could meet the van at the Yadkin County Schools main office at 3:30 on the 4th for shuttle service. Dr. Benfield invited any interested Board members and both Chairs to speak at the ceremonies. Chair Phillips asked that all local, state, and national representatives be notified.

■ **MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT FINANCING**

County Manager, Eric Williams reported that plans are on schedule. Manager Williams intends to send RFPs to the banks in time for LGC review at their March 4 meeting. If unable to meet this timeline, the next LGC meeting will be April 1. The middle school plans are still being reviewed by the Department of Insurance. The NCDOI has sent a letter to the architects outlining their questions and concerns. Manager Williams stated that the Board of Commissioners will have several forthcoming financial actions regarding the middle schools.

■ **PRELIMINARY OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE NEW MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

Yadkin County School Superintendent, Dr. Jim Benfield, presented a preliminary operating budget for Forbush Middle School and Starmount Middle School for school year 2009/2010. Dr. Benfield noted that the Board of Education had not yet had the opportunity to review this budget. Dr. Benfield described various line items. Vice Chair Cornelius questioned the projected electrical costs. Dr. Benfield explained that both middle schools will be solely electric in heat and air. Dr. Hazel Brown remarked that the preliminary outline of operating costs appeared to be conservative and realistic.

**[Preliminary Operating Budget for Forbush Middle School and Starmount Middle School
for School Year 2009/2010 is attached as Addendum A]**

■ **UTILITY PROJECTS RELATED TO SCHOOLS**

County Manager Williams reported that the waterline to Starmount High School should be complete in one month. The waterline to West Yadkin Elementary is installed, connected, and in use. The Courtney-Huntsville Waterline Extension to Courtney Elementary School and Courtney Volunteer Fire Department lacks 1 outstanding easement before the Notice to Proceed can be issued. Manager Williams anticipates that this Notice to Proceed may be issued in a week or so with 4 months projected for completion. Dr. Benfield thanked the members of the Yadkin County Board of Commissioners for making water available to the schools.

■ **OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST**

Board of Education Chair, Karin Mendenhall stated that the Board will soon begin their budget planning for 2008/2009 and will work as quickly as possible on this task. The BOE should receive the financial data that they need from the State in February. The Yadkin County Board of Education will work to maintain the current budget, adding no additional monies or programs.

Chair Phillips asked the Board of Education to consider returning to a 7-period schedule as opposed to the current block schedule. Chair Phillips believes that the 7-period schedule offers more opportunity and options for students. Chair Phillips added that she would like to see foreign language and algebra offered in the middle schools and would like to see more emphasis on the AIG programs in the elementary schools, possibly increasing the AIG to a full time class.

School Board member, Howard McKnight, remarked that the block schedule is much more suited for science curriculums because it allows time for labs and more hands on experiences.

Assistant Superintendent, Gary McDonald, offered that the block schedule eliminates much transition time and allows more time on the material.

Additional discussion followed, including the trend for distance learning. Dr. Benfield stated that students are likely to be more successful in this environment if there is at least some face-to-face contact. Dr. Hazel Brown added that most students prefer at least some face-to-face contact as well.

Commissioner Cornelius inquired about establishing a dress code or requiring uniforms for Yadkin County Schools. Chair Mendenhall replied that uniforms have been discussed in the past but there are currently no plans to implement. Chair Mendenhall further remarked that dress codes have been addressed in all the schools and that the schools are doing a better job of enforcing appropriate dress. Mr. McDonald added that uniforms are in use at the Yadkin Success Academy.

Commissioner Cornelius requested an update on the Early College program. Mr. McDonald stated that all reports indicate that the program is doing very well. School Board member, Frank Brown, added that most of the participants in the program are first generation college students who may not have been totally successful in the typical classroom setting. Dr. Benfield remarked that the program allows a student, who may not have otherwise been college bound, the opportunity to be successful in the high school range and receive their 2 year degree as well.

Mr. McDonald stated that the majority of the participants entered the program in Medical Assisting, Criminal Justice, and other 2 year technical degree programs, but most have now moved to a college transfer curriculum. County Manager, Eric Williams, stated that there are preliminary discussions of expansion to accommodate anticipated growth in the program.

Commissioner Wagoner stated that he currently works with several teenage girls that are pregnant. Commissioner Wagoner inquired about the sex education, and possibly abstinence, curriculums offered in the schools. Commissioner Wagoner added that the middle schools would be an excellent venue to introduce these topics. Mr. McDonald replied that sex education and abstinence are covered in the health curriculum. There are also plans to establish focus groups at the middle schools to discuss self-esteem issues and address other issues that put teens in a compromising situation.

Commissioner Wooten asked the School Board to address any possible gang activity in Yadkin County schools. Mr. McDonald explained that all faculty receive gang awareness training on how to identify possible gang members and possible gang activity. Dr. Benfield added that there appears to be gang members but no organized gangs in the schools.

UPCOMING SCHEDULE FOR JOINT BOARD MEETINGS

County Manager Eric Williams reviewed the schedule for joint meetings for the remainder of the year:

3/31/08 BOE to host
6/30/08 BOC to host
9/29/08 BOE to host
12/29/08 BOC to host

Chair Phillips remarked that the meeting scheduled for 6/30/08 may need to be rescheduled due to budget work. The meeting scheduled for 12/29/08 may be rescheduled in consideration of the holidays. The Board of Commissioners will notify the Board of Education of any changes to the meeting schedule. Chair Mendenhall offered that the next meeting to be hosted by the Board of Education would begin at 6:00pm. The meeting place will be announced later.

FINAL COMMENTS

Dr. Benfield reported that work has already begun on the outer perimeter of the Forbush Middle School site to remove trees, brush, and debris. Site preparation will begin in a few weeks at the Starmount Middle School site.

Commissioner Cornelius asked the Board to address recent misunderstandings with the Forbush High School Hunter Safety Team. Dr. Benfield explained that there had been a mis-communication regarding the need for the Hunter Safety Team to relocate during site preparation. There had been a misunderstanding that the new plans did not include a shooting range or an area for the Hunter Safety Team to practice. Dr. Benfield assured the Commissioners that Yadkin County Schools intends to continue the Hunter Safety Program. Dr. Benfield stated that there are plans to meet with the Hunter Safety Program Coordinators to discuss options.

ADJOURN

No further business for discussion.

Brock Matthews made a motion to adjourn the Yadkin County Board of Education. Dr. Hazel Brown second.

Vote: 6/0

Vice Chair Cornelius made a motion to adjourn the Yadkin County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Garner second.

Vote: 5/0